

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 (ADP) W

----- 014179

O R 051335Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5691

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 6141

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, LA

SUBJECT: LAO NEGOTIATIONS: STORM CLOUDS DISSIPATE

SUMMARY: CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE IN SEPTEMBER 5 CABINET MEETING WAS COMPLETE CHANGE FROM PESSIMISM AND GLOOM WHICH HAD SETT-

LED OVER VIENTIANE DURING LAST 48 HOURS.

PRIME MINISTER DID NOT REPEAT NOT RAISE HIS INTENTION TO RESIGN BECAUSE OF IMPASSE IN NEGOTIATIONS. INSTEAD CABINET AGREED TO PRIME MINISTER'S SUGGESTION TO LET FAR GENERALS DISCUSS DIRECTLY WITH LPF MILITARY THOSE MILITARY ASPECTS OF PROTOCOL WHICH GIVE FAR MOST PROBLEM. HENCE POLITICAL CRISIS HAS BEEN DEFLATED FOR TIME BEING. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING THE LAST 24 HOURS PRIME MINISTER RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM A NUMBER OF DIRECTIONS WHICH CHANGED HIS TACTICS IN SEPTEMBER 5 CABINET MEETING. AFTER HAVING BEEN REASSURED OF STAUNCH US BACKING BY ME YESTERDAY, GENERAL DHEP, ON BEHALF MARSHALL THANOM, PLEDGED THAI CONFIDENCE IN SOUVANNA'S LEADERSHIP. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER LEUAM ALSO TOLD PRIME MINISTER THAT IN THE CRUNCH HE WOULD SUPPORT HIM.

2. EVENING SEPTEMBER 5 PHENG STRESSED TO ME PRIME MINISTER'S OPTIMISTIC MOOD IN THE CABINET MEETING WHICH  
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PHENG ATTRIBUTED TO VISIT SOUVANNA HAD RECEIVED FROM KEY FAR OFFICERS AND REASSURANCES HE OBTAINED FROM MOST CABINET MEMBERS ABOUT HIS INDISPENSABILITY IN LAOS. IN COURSE OF CABINET MEETING PRIME MINISTER NEVER ALLUDED

TO INTENTION TO RESIGN IF PROTOCOL NOT SIGNED. PRIME MINISTER INFORMED CABINET ABOUT PLANNED SEPTEMBER 6 MEETING BETWEEN FAR GENERALS AND LPF MILITARY (VIENTIANE 6140) SO THAT MILITARY OF THE TWO SIDES CAN CLARIFY AND RESOLVE THOSE ASPECTS OF PROTOCOL WHICH GIVE FAR PROBLEMS. ACCORDING TO PHENG, PHOUMI VONGVICHIT HAD AGREED TO SUCH A MEETING EARLIER IN THE DAY WHEN HE CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER. PHENG CLAIMED THE FAR AND LPF MILITARY OFFICERS WILL DISCUSS FAR CONCERNS OVER NEED TO RECOGNIZE ENCLAVES, HOW BEST TO NEUTRALIZE CITIES AND LOCATION OF RESPECTIVE FORCES IN COUNTRY. THE PRIME MINISTER THOUGHT THAT THE DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN THE MILITARY OF THE TWO SIDES WOULD HELP DISSOLVE DISTRUST BETWEEN THEM AND FACILITATE SIGNING OF PROTOCOL.

3. COMMENT: ATMOSPHERE OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN SOUVANNA AND NGON OVER THE PRESENT PROTOCOL HAS BEEN DISPELLED BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S ASTUTE INITIATIVE OF TAKING PROBLEM OUT OF POLITICAL ARENA FOR THE TIME BEING AND GIVING FAR AND LPF MILITARY OPPORTUNITY TO CLARIFY THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS. NEVER A DULL MOMENT IN THIS COUNTRY\*  
DEAN

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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